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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

PART III. EUROPE

Section 4 - Azerbaijan

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-02929

III.4 AZERBAIJAN

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee and internally displaced population

1. According to government statistics, at 31 December 1993, Azerbaijan hosted a population of 230,000 ethnic Azeri refugees from Armenia and Meshketi Turkish refugees from Central Asia, as well as small numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers from other countries. The Government recorded 778,000 internally displaced persons resulting from the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

2. Most refugees from Armenia arrived in 1989, whereas the vast majority of displaced persons from the western regions moved in the course of 1993 and of 1994. While 90 per cent of refugees have settled, few of the internally displaced have found a home, with the majority living in make-shift shelters. Some 77,000 persons live in eleven camps funded and managed by the Iranian, Turkish and Saudi Red Crescent Societies. Of the refugees who are able to work, 77 per cent have been provided with jobs, whereas only 42 per cent of internally displaced persons are employed. Children up to 15 years of age comprise 42 per cent of the displaced population. At 31 December 1993, among the 99,030 men and 119,178 women who had listed an occupation, 58 per cent were involved in agriculture. There were 205,907 unemployed and 96,347 elderly.

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

3. The programme of emergency assistance was to run until May 1993, but had to be extended. An updated appeal was launched in May 1993 following a large-scale displacement of 50,000 persons from the Kelbajar region. In the second part of the year, the number of internally displaced persons increased dramatically. Consequently, UNHCR increased the number of beneficiaries from 150,000 to 300,000 persons, though the nature of the programme remained essentially the same, in terms of providing emergency relief assistance to the newly displaced persons.

4. In April 1994, a further 50,000 persons were displaced.

Programme objectives and priorities

Refugees from Armenia and Central Asia

5. As the majority of refugees are settled and therefore unlikely to return to their places of origin, individual assistance will be provided to those who are considered vulnerable on the same basis as to internally displaced persons. They will also benefit from community based assistance in such sectors as health, education, water and sanitation, and income generation activities. In addition, UNHCR will assist the Government, if requested, in matters of nationality and citizenship.

Internally displaced persons

6. While it is hoped that return to places of origin will be possible when conditions permit, programme objectives are to help the internally displaced to maintain an acceptable level of physical well-being during their displacement as well as to allow them to engage in normal economic and other activities pending a solution of the conflict which caused them to flee their homes.

7. Provision of essential household items (blankets, clothing, heaters, kitchen sets, footwear) will continue. Shelter is being provided and alternative classroom facilities are being constructed in order to reduce the pressure on the internally displaced persons to vacate schools where they are currently living. Assistance will also be provided in the sectors of health, water, sanitation and education, as well as to promote economic activities.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

8. Since 1993, the first year of UNHCR's operations in the country, the Office has been directly involved in the distribution of relief items. As the Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become more operational and experienced, activities will increasingly be taken over by them. The Government's administrative structure, down to the village level, plays a vital role in the distribution of relief assistance.

9. The Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) is responsible for the receipt, storage, transport and distribution of relief items.

10. OXFAM-UK is engaged in the rehabilitation and construction of the water and sanitation systems as well as in accompanying health education programme.

11. Médecins Sans Frontières-Belgium (MSF-Belgium) is responsible for the implementation of basic medical field assessments, basic medical training as well as procurement and distribution of medicines.

12. Relief International-USA (RI-USA) ensures, in cooperation with MSF-Belgium, the implementation of the health/nutrition sector, serving the most isolated rural communities by means of medical outreach programmes.

13. Among the United Nations agencies, WFP is providing basic food items for 300,000 vulnerable displaced persons, and UNICEF is involved in its traditional activities for both the displaced and stable populations. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the ICRC, and non-governmental organizations, funded by the European Union and donor Governments, are also providing substantial humanitarian aid.

General Programmes

1994 planned implementation

14. The initial 1994 General Programmes appropriation for care and maintenance has been cancelled and assistance is incorporated under Special Programmes.

Special Programmes

(a) Variations in planned activities in 1993

15. Due to increasing numbers of displaced persons coming from Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas, the number of beneficiaries receiving emergency and relief assistance was increased from an initial 150,000 to 300,000.

(b) 1994 planned implementation

16. With instability in the region persisting, emergency measures continue, including the provision of domestic items and shelter materials. UNHCR's objective is to gradually initiate activities leading to long-term solutions. The fact that some 79 per cent of the displaced persons are temporarily housed in public buildings, such as schools, dormitories and tecnnical institutes, requires measures to reduce the strain on the local infrastructure.

17. The inadequacy of resources in the face of additional needs and problems in transport of relief items to the country have led to shortfalls in the provision of assistance.

18. A limited amount of tents and plastic sheeting will continue to be provided for shelter. A pilot project will be undertaken to construct low cost housing units with local materials. In order to enable the schools which are at present occupied by refugees and displaced persons to resume classes, it is planned to erect a number of prefabricated classrooms.

19. The densely populated buildings pose a serious health hazard as a result of inadequate supplies of potable water and poor hygienic conditions. Gastric and skin diseases are prevalent. It is planned to improve conditions by increasing the capacity of water systems and by building temporary latrines.

20. Assistance to district hospitals to cope with the increased number of patients seeking treatment includes the provision of selected supplies, equipment and medicines. There will be a field outreach programme entailing the provision of mobile medical assistance to the displaced persons in rural areas who cannot travel to a medical centre.

21. Small-scale farming, as practised in the country, would enable the refugees and displaced farmers to grow vegetables to supplement their diet and sell their surplus produce on the market. Suitable agricultural land is expected to be made available, but interested farmers will need to be provided with agricultural tools, seeds and fertilizer. A limited number of carpenters, mechanics, masons, etc. will be provided with tools to promote their economic self-reliance.

22. The sectoral breakdown for the initial and revised 1994 care and maintenance allocation is as follows (in US dollars):

Sector	Initial 1994	Revised 1994	Initial 1995
Transport	450,000	1,102,300	370,,610
Domestic needs	1,950,000	1,868,500	690,000
Water	130,000	163,500	82,150
Sanitation	64,000	173,800	117,860
Health	100,000	608,200	800,000
Shelter	330,000	515,000	2,250,000
Education	10,000	2,050,000	625,000
Crop production	0	200,000	220,000
Livestock	6,700	0	0
Income-generation	5,000	100,000	120,000
Legal assistance	60,000	48,500	37,000
Agency op. support	30,000	370,800	2,640
Project personnel	383,700	0	0
Programme delivery costs	0	1,088,000	1,126,000
Total	3,519,400	8,288,600	6,441,300

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

23. In the absence of a political settlement, the situation for refugees and displaced persons is unlikely to change. The 1995 programme will focus on finding a more permanent solution to the shelter problem and on fostering economic self-reliance. The current shelter situation is not acceptable in the long term, since schools and other educational institutions must resume their normal functions. Displaced persons are themselves acutely aware of this problem and are trying to find alternative shelter.

24. Developments in the region will influence the approach taken in identifying solutions to shelter and self-sufficiency problems. Other sectors of assistance will be retained on a reduced scale. Household items which require replacement and items of recurrent use will be provided. Assistance in education, health, water and sanitation will be maintained at the same level as in 1994.

25. If a political settlement allows the return of displaced persons to their areas of origin in 1995, less emergency aid will be called for and UNHCR will be able to focus on repatriation, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes. In view of the level of destruction in the occupied regions, these programmes are likely to be on a large scale and require a coordinated programme which involves a number of international and bilateral sources.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

26. The establishment of an additional post and significant staff movement resulted in expenditure being slightly higher than expected. As office space at the initial location was insufficient, it was also necessary to rent additional premises as of October 1993.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

27. The four international and twelve local posts were extended until December 1995. Posts for a field monitoring team as well as for three support staff, including a Telecommunications Assistant, were created effective 1 July 1994. All international staff members are entitled to mission status, mandatory absence for the relief of stress and procurement missions abroad, as the posting is considered a non-family duty station. This has resulted in an increase in the common staff costs component of the revised budget.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

28. It is anticipated that the level of expenditure in 1995 will be similar to the current year. More appropriate office premises may, however, be required.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN AZERBAIJAN

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
0.3 a/	3,519.4	–	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	–
0.3	3,519.4	0.0	SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	0.0
0.3	3,519.4	0.0	TOTAL (1)	0.0
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
7,446.1	–	7,200.6	OTHER TRUST FUNDS	5,315.3
–	–	1,088.0	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	1,126.0
–	–	159.0	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	91.1
7,446.1	0.0	8,447.6	TOTAL (2)	6,532.4
7,446.4	3,519.4	8,447.6	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	6,532.4

a/ obligation incurred against Overall Allocation